

Grande Prairie, Alberta

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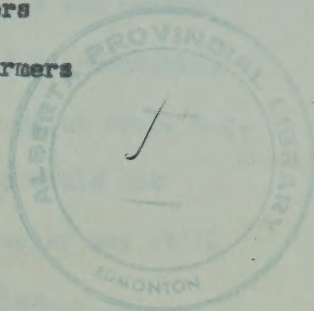


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Brief to Alberta Cabinet Ministers

Requesting Aid for Peace River Area Farmers

Presented by Unifarm Region One



Honourable Sirs:

It is my pleasure as Unifarm Region One Director to have this opportunity to discuss the current harvest situation.

Farm conditions in the Peace range from fair to very serious. Many farmers were unable to swath their crops so that those not flattened by snow and rain during the latter part of September were shattered off by high winds during the first week of October.

Many fields would not carry equipment previous to the last storm, so it will take a long spell of extremely good weather before harvest can resume in these areas. Even if harvest can be completed this fall which is probable in some areas but extremely unlikely in others, nearly everyone has suffered losses from some or all of the following: -

1. weathering - loss of grades
2. shattering from high winds
3. wild life damage - ducks and geese
4. lack of field preparation effects next year's crop

Farmers with livestock face shortages of feed and bedding, many have had to start their winter feeding program as crops are still on fields normally used for fall grazing.

Fields under seeded to forage crops suffer from rutting causing long term losses.

It is unfortunate that through no fault of their own many farmers are facing a very serious income situation. Continually rising costs have forced many to expand and modernize to try to enlarge their enterprises sufficiently so that their volume of production would help offset narrow profit margins.

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Crop Insurance should be the answer but as we pointed out in our brief to the Special M.L.A. Committee on Crop Insurance and Weather Modification the present insurance program has proved unacceptable.

To illustrate - a farmer could have insured his major crop, e.g. barley and having harvested 50% of his barley acreage would not likely be entitled to any insurance. Yet half his barley may still be in the field along with all his wheat, oats and flax.

In the County of Grande Prairie on C soil, "stubble", insurance at the 60% level would guarantee 15 bushels at 65¢ per bushel = \$9.75 per acre. Production costs are near the \$30.00 per acre level so coverage is not realistic.

No deductions for P.F.A. were made from any producers last year nor are any deductions being made in the current crop year.

The following requests are presented for your careful consideration:

1. All farmers in need should receive assistance, including those with Crop Insurance.
2. To keep many farmers in business a cash grant is required.
3. Such grant to be handled through the Prairie Farm Assistance Act.
4. All farmers in the effected area receive \$10.00 per acre up to 250 acres = \$2,500.00.
5. Farmers with larger holdings who suffered extensive crop loss receive \$5.00 per acre of unharvested grain to a maximum grant of \$5,000.00, e.g. a farm having 500 acres of unharvested crop would receive:

$$250 \times \$10.00 = \$2,500.00$$

$$250 \times \$ 5.00 = \underline{\$1,250.00}$$

$$\text{Total} = \$3,750.00$$

6. A one year debt moratorium on debts against land and equipment.

7. This years due principal be carried to the end of the debt contract at simple interest.
8. That Governments be prepared to assist with the transportation of livestock feed and seed grain into the affected areas.
9. The above points are necessary to cope with the current crises. But the long term solution is a realistic crop insurance program revised to cover high production costs.

Respectfully submitted

Melvin Longson,

Director, Uniform Region One

